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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0078

INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE

RUEAHND/COMJTF-B SOTO CANO HO IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE 0217

RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RULGPSU/COMSOC SOUTH IMMEDIATE

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 1090

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000567

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/08/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [HO](#) [ASEC](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAN SOCIETY WELCOMES ARIAS TALKS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 555

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (U) Summary: Despite ongoing protests from both sides, Hondurans appear to accept the U.S.-backed idea to bring President Zelaya and the Micheletti regime together for talks with President Arias of Costa Rica later this week. On Tuesday, Congress held its first session since June 28, seven days after the coup and swearing-in of Micheletti as de facto president. Despite these attempts to return to normal, it does not appear the de facto regime can pull off elections earlier than already planned on November 29. From various regime supporters there is concern that talks with Arias will result in President Zelaya returning and not facing the charges pending against him. End Summary.

12. (U) National media outlets reported heavily today on the meeting between President Zelaya and the Secretary in Washington on Tuesday. These reports indicate widespread confidence that the mediation provided by Costa Rican President Oscar Arias will pave the way toward peace. Several articles credit the Secretary for her assistance in reaching agreement among the parties on how to move forward. There is some local negative reaction to the decision not to recognize de facto regime Ambassador Roberto Flores Bermudez and to issues surrounding the visa status of Flores and other former Zelaya diplomats in Washington who now support the Micheletti regime.

13. (C) In another sign that different sectors of society are attempting to resume normal activity, Congress met on Tuesday for the first time since June 28. Off the record discussions among congressmen included possible "amnesty" for President Zelaya, however no consensus or decision was reached. Dissident members did not denounce the June 28 coup as they indicated they might (Reftel). However, they did attempt to circulate their July 3 statement to foreign reporters who have come to Tegucigalpa to cover the crisis. Contacts state Congress appointed a "technical commission" made up of outside experts to study Honduran membership in the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) and its implications for Honduras. Congress approved a motion requesting the de facto regime to review the 111 laws approved by Congress since 2006 that have not been signed or published by the executive branch.

¶4. (C) Supporters of Micheletti express reserved confidence in the talks in Costa Rica and a high level of respect for Costa Rican President Arias. In a meeting with a Honduran who has attended all "white" pro-Micheletti marches since the group originated, she expressed to PolOff that an overwhelming concern among that group with the talks in Costa Rica is that President Zelaya could return to Honduras without facing the charges made against him by the Honduran Supreme Court. Furthermore, the contact stated that many in the "white movement" recognize the need for dialogue but express concern that the mediator, President Arias, has already made known his opinion that President Zelaya's removal was unconstitutional. The white group-member did qualify this by explaining that many participants in the group are not necessarily anti-Zelaya, but instead more generally support justice and the rule of law and would support the result of talks in Costa Rica if these principles are respected.

¶5. (C) Many sectors have suggested moving general elections sooner as a possible solution to the crisis in Honduras. However, the Supreme Electoral Council (TSE) expressed Tuesday it would be very difficult logistically to move up the general elections scheduled for November 29. The TSE said the elections were only 138 days away, and to be on schedule TSE should have executed 30 percent of its election funding by this point, whereas it has received only 3 percent of its budget. A legal advisor in the office of the Vice President of the Supreme Court that facilitated the order of capture against President Zelaya told PolOff that the option of accelerated elections is legally possible, but

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logistically unlikely. To the question of Costa Rica, the legal advisor expressed to PolOff a deep respect for Costa Rican President Arias. However, the Supreme Court advisor expressed that there is worry among some Supreme Court staff members that as a politician, Micheletti may negotiate away some of the charges against President Zelaya. The legal advisor described this possibility as bad for Honduran rule of law and against the Supreme Court, stating that "all they have wanted all along is justice."

¶6. (C) Comment: It appears from the Micheletti regime's public pronouncements and Congress' docket they are working to appear as though it is business as normal. The political climate in Honduras suggests that many sectors support the talks in Costa Rica that will occur this week. However, there is disagreement on what should be negotiated and what the end point should be. End Comment.
LLORENS